Supporting Children in Cultures of Caring and Competence

December 4, 2015
Goal: children’s early experiences ensure that they enter the fourth grade:

* Having confidence that they belong and can do well in school

* Knowing that they are valued and valuable

* Knowing that who they are, and what they know, say, and feel is important
A culture of caring needs to be in place before substantive learning can occur. It is foundational to child success as it ensures one feels safe, valued, and accepted.
A Good Start is Critical to a Child’s Success

Children form academic trajectories early in their school careers that tend to be stable and difficult to change over the course of their schooling (Alexander & Entwisle, 1993).

What does this mean for children who have a difficult beginning to their school careers?
CLASS: Emotional Support Across PreK-3

- Positive Climate: Pre K = 5.3, K = 4.1, 1st Grade = 5.1, 2nd Grade = 4.6, 3rd Grade = 4.0
- Negative Climate: Pre K = 1.3, K = 3.0, 1st Grade = 1.6, 2nd Grade = 1.4, 3rd Grade = 2.1
- Teacher Sensitivity: Pre K = 5.3, K = 4.6, 1st Grade = 4.3, 2nd Grade = 3.5, 3rd Grade = 3.5
- Regard for Std Perspective: Pre K = 4.8, K = 3.3, 1st Grade = 3.9, 2nd Grade = 3.5, 3rd Grade = 2.9
Impact of Absenteeism in Kindergarten on 5th Grade Achievement

Average academic performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Absenteeism in kindergarten</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Math</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0–3.3%</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3–6.6%</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6–10.0%</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥10.0%</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>46</td>
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Act consistently on the knowledge that children cannot and will not optimize their learning without a positive relationship with their teacher.
Children who expect not to trust their caregiver/teachers often act in ways that makes them less likeable. This behavior challenges adult emotion regulation and interactive skills.
Emotion Regulation and Interactive Skills

**Surface Acting** - In order to get through the day, I act differently from how I feel.
Correlates with low positive climate and teacher sensitivity.

**Deep Acting** - I try to actually experience my emotions and share them appropriately and realistically with my students.
Correlates with high positive climate and teacher sensitivity.
When adults can regulate their own emotional states, they are more likely to calm rather than punish a challenging child.

When adults can reflect on their caring practices they can modify their own responses.
All the things we say we don’t have time for are all the things we should prioritize.
TEACH both content and citizenship: Children need to learn how to ‘do school’, NOT be punished for their inability to do so.

What are daily practices that support or hinder this in your practice?
Question policies and practices that contribute to short or long term problems for children:

- Multiple adults
- Arbitrary rules
- Behavior systems
- Continuing practices where the same children experience problems on a regular basis
Start with strength

* A strength-based approach looks for opportunities to complement and support existing strengths and capacities of children, families and communities.

* This necessitates a focus on what is present rather than what is absent.
Individualism fosters and promotes independence, individual thinking, individual achievement, self-expression, and personal choice.

Collectivism fosters and values interdependence, group success through adherence to norms, respect for authority, and group consensus.

(Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch, & Greenfield, 2000).
Collectivism: Collaboration

- School 12: 11
- School 13: 26
- School 15: 12
- School 16: 12
CLASS: Emotional Support
Across PreK-3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Pre K</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>1st Grade</th>
<th>2nd Grade</th>
<th>3rd Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive Climate</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Climate</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Sensitivity</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regard for Std Perspective</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend:
- Pre K
- K
- 1st Grade
- 2nd Grade
- 3rd Grade
African American and Latino students learn more and prefer learning experiences that allow them to **interact with others**. (Dill & Boykin, 2000).

African American’s **oral-narrative skills** may be a unique area of strength that may promote later success in reading achievement (Gardner-Neblett, Pungello, & Iruka, 2012; Gardner-Neblett, N., & Iruka, I. U. (2015)).

African American children’s engagement is supported by instruction and activities that are **relevant to their lives** (Cohen et al, 2009).
What do you do?

* To prioritize children working together in meaningful ways?
* To value oral narrative, dictation, story telling, sharing
* To honor the lives of the children, families and communities you serve?
What do the children and families who spend time in your school and classrooms see in the hallways, on the classroom walls, and in the bookcases?

* Do they see pictures of themselves as individuals and members of their families and communities?
* Do they see their own work predominantly displayed?
* Do they see diversity honored through visual images of people of color living and achieving in a variety of ways?
* Do classroom and library books depict and tell stories of people from multiple racial and cultural backgrounds?
* Are languages other than English evident in books, posters and classroom print?
For white children, classrooms that support the positive identity of diverse populations:

* broaden their view
* provide more balanced exposure to the strengths and contributions of people of color
* better prepare them to navigate an increasingly diverse world.
Develop the Whole Child

Percentage of Observation

- Literacy: 41%
- Math: 14%
- Science: 4%
- Gross Motor: 7%
- Social Studies: 10%
- Aesthetics: 1%
“ I am happy of myself!”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ealvk1cSyG8
A culture of competence ensures each child is a productive, successful, and contributing member of the team.
What are we thinking?

* Children who attend programs during their earliest years (0-4) spend their days learning to negotiate materials, space and relationships.

* Too often as they enter the kindergarten door, they are seen as children who cannot work independently or with others.
Self regulation cannot develop when adults regulate behavior.

As children develop self-regulation, they:

* ignore distractions
* focus and attend
* delay gratification
* persist in challenging situations
* ask for help
* control emotions and express them appropriately

(McClelland, Acock, & Morrison, 2002).
Executive function:

- Planning
- Organization
- Ability to take in and benefit from multiple perspectives

The brain needs practice
Facilitation and Barriers

- Question policies and practices that are barriers to children’s development of self regulation and executive function
- Facilitate the development of self regulation and executive function by considering them part of the curriculum. They need to be taught and practiced daily….just like math and literacy
- REMEMBER-Teach content and citizenship
Learning Occurs Through Language

* Children who are talking are learning.
* Teachers who are listening are learning.
* Children need to use language to express feelings, solve social and academic problems, convey ideas and interests and negotiate.
* Children with larger vocabularies do better in school.
* Children acquiring a second language need to talk.
* Children whose words are valued and respected feel good about themselves as learners and individuals.

FirstSchool 2011
Do your actions speak louder than your beliefs?

* Each child comes as a blank slate, a vessel to be filled with knowledge.
* “I’m the teacher, and what I have to say is more important than what the children have to say.”

OR

* Children need to have the opportunity to construct knowledge by interacting with materials, peers, and adults

FirstSchool 2011
Teaching approaches

Scaffolds: 31%

Didactic: 27%
Let the children talk!
* A classroom emphasis on oral language development has been identified as one of the premier instructional strategies for ensuring the success of children, especially those from low socio-economic communities

  (Mason & Galloway, 2012).

* Vocabulary proficiency is a critical predictor of academic achievement beginning as early as the third grade

  (Storch & Whitehurst, 2002).
How do we create a parallel process wherein adults prosper in cultures of caring and competence?
Goal: teacher’s experiences ensure that they:

* have confidence that they belong and can do well in their jobs
* know that they are valued and valuable,
* know that who they are, and what they know, say, and feel is important.

SO

Ask don’t tell

Move from evaluation to inquiry

Focus on continuous improvement
Think Different

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SswMzUWOiJg
Go forth....

* Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world: Indeed it is the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead

Be happy of yourselves!